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SCHAKOWSKY ANNOUNCES LEGISLATION TO PROTECT KIDS FROM DANGEROUS PRODUCTS

INTRODUCES BILL IN RESPONSE TO REPORT ON RECALLED CHILDREN

CHICAGO, IL -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, ranking member on the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, today announced new legislation to better protect children from dangerous products. Schakowsky said she would introduce the Infant and Toddler Durable Product Safety Act, which would set mandatory safety standards for children's products.

Representative Schakowsky's full statement is below, as prepared for delivery:

Because of the pervasive problem highlighted in your report, "Dangers at Play," I am once again introducing a bill that would help prevent needless death and injury of young children, the Infant and Toddler Durable Product Safety Act. My bill would require infant and toddler products to receive a federal seal of approval before they are sold. This bill is long overdue.

Currently, most consumers believe that, because a product is on a shelf, it is safe.

A Coalition for Consumer Rights' survey in Illinois found that 75-percent of adults believe that the government oversees pre-market testing for children's products; 79-percent believe that manufacturers are required to test the safety of those products before they are sold. For most products, neither is true.

In fact, there are no mandatory safety standards for the majority of the children's products being sold today. The majority of the standards that are in place are "voluntarily" set by the very industries looking to make profits. They are also allowed to police themselves about whether the standards are enforced.

Let me stress what that means: although there may be voluntary standards in place, there are no requirements that all potential hazards are addressed in those standards, no requirement that products be tested in the field, no consequences for the manufacturer if the standards are not met, and no requirements for products to be tested to see if the standards are met. This is true even for baby carriers, cradles, play pens, and high chairs. For the few products that do have mandatory federal standards, like the cribs mentioned in "Danger at Play," there are no

testing requirement so the standards are rendered meaningless.

Although the Consumer Products Safety Commission - the CPSC - requires no testing and manufacturers may or may not perform their own tests, do not be mistaken, children's products are tested. They are tested in our own homes, with our children and grandchildren as test dummies. The cost of those tests can be a panicked child, amputated fingers, fractured skulls, or a dead child.

Unfortunately, a trip to the emergency, or the morgue, or the issuing a voluntary recall after one or more children have been hurt or killed is often the only way to know if a product is unsafe. This is unacceptable.

Parents and caregivers must have assurance that when they buy a product, it will be safe. Therefore, my bill would not only require the CPSC to issue mandatory safety standards for infant and toddler products, but it would require the testing and certification of these products by an independent third party before it is allowed to be sold to anyone.

It is past due that we give parents the security they deserve and children the safety they need.